

Depression – new ways of thinking

For those people in a depressed state, it is encouraging for them to know that there are things they can do today that will make tomorrow better.

We all know that there are degrees of depression - from feeling slightly down - to being in the depths of despair. There are many different theories about its causes and possible cures. The World Health Organisation predicts that depression will become the second most debilitating condition worldwide by 2020 (currently fourth behind heart disease, cancer and traffic accidents).

In so far as one can generalise about these things, people who feel depressed or have been diagnosed with depression tend to have certain thinking patterns in common. They tend to endlessly analyse or ruminate. They tend to have a past rather than future focus. Thoughts tend to be of the negative, half empty glass, variety. They also tend to believe the negative thoughts that they have been thinking and have difficulty differentiating between what is a valid thought and one that is best to disregard. There are other patterns too.

However, the most recent statistics show that although 15% of people who have been diagnosed as depressed need ongoing medication, 75% of people are able to recover completely through learning new patterns of thinking – and that having learnt these, they are better able to maintain a stable state. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is one such approach for doing this.

People learn how to:

- think clearly,
- behave effectively,
- relate positively to themselves and others (as taught in interpersonal therapies),
- reduce vulnerability to relapses.

It is also clear that these cognitive therapies are enhanced and made even more effective using hypnosis.

One of the attributes of hypnosis is that it enables a person to amplify useful memories or thoughts and diminish less helpful musing or imagination. It becomes easier to remember those times which have gone well – and how that was achieved; easier to leave memories in the past that belong in the past; easier to believe in a more positive future, with more positive relationships and more self belief.

The feeling of personal worth that this generates seems to be an important factor in sustained recovery.